

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A solid medium suitable for culturing microorganisms, the solid medium ~~containing~~ comprising a cellulose gel as a medium-solidifying component, which is a porous gel-like material obtained by ~~heating and~~ dissolving cellulose dispersed in aqueous thiocyanate salt solution by heating, [[and]] subsequently cooling and solidifying the resulting solution from which solvent is removed, and then permeating a nutrient component suitable for supporting a culture of a microorganism into the resulting cellulose.

Claim 2 (Original): A solid medium according to claim 1, where the crystallization degree of the cellulose gel is 5 to 70 %.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A solid medium according to claim 1, where the molecular weight of the cellulose ~~used~~ is 10,000 to 2,000,000.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): A solid medium according to claim 1, where the cellulose gel is a porous cellulose gel structure with a cellulose backbone and at a cellulose concentration of 0.01 % or more.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): A solid medium according to claim 1, where the cellulose gel is a porous gel-like structure at a porosity of 50 % or more.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Withdrawn-Currently Amended): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium, the method comprising the steps of dissolving or swelling cellulose dispersed in a solvent by mechanical mixing, heating or mixing and heating, subsequently solidifying the resulting cellulose by cooling, solvent removal or cooling and solvent removal and permeating nutrient components into the cellulose.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium according to claim 7, including dissolving cellulose dispersed in a solvent by heating, subsequently solidifying the resulting solution by cooling to remove the solvent component, and permeating nutrient components into the resulting cellulose.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium according to claim 7, where the solvent is an aqueous solution of an alkali metal salt or alkali earth meal salt of thiocyanic acid.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium according to claim 7, where the solvent is an aqueous solution of calcium thiocyanate.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): A method for producing a solid cellulose gel medium according to claim 7, where the solvent is an aqueous saturated solution of calcium thiocyanate and the heating temperature is 70 to 200 °C.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn-Currently Amended): A method for culturing a microorganism or a cell, including the method comprising culturing a microorganism or a cell on the surface of a solid medium using with a cellulose gel as a medium-solidifying component.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): A method for culturing a microorganism according to claim 12, where the microorganism to be cultured on the solid medium using the cellulose gel is a microorganism of an [[in]] extreme environment.

Claim 14 (New) The solid medium according to claim 1, which is in a disc form or a column form.

Claim 15 (New) A petri dish, comprising the solid medium according to claim 1.

Claim 16 (New) A test tube, comprising the solid medium according to claim 1.